



## RESPONSE TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

**TO:** WSSC Water

**FROM:** WSP USA Inc.

**SUBJECT: Response to Public Questions for Independent Evaluation and Audit of the WSSC Water 48-Inch Patuxent Raw Water Main Project - BF1582E91**

**DATE:** January 8, 2026

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WSP USA Inc. (WSP) received a total of three comments in response to the 48" Raw Water Main Project Audit comprehensive report, the executive summary, and presentation. These comments included feedback from the public as well as from the Maryland General Assembly's 21<sup>st</sup> District Delegation.

The comments WSP received acknowledged the audit scope and WSP's efforts to deliver an independent, evidence-based audit and appreciate the insights into the project's areas for improvement. The comments were in concurrence with the valuable observations and recommendations from the report. Key points included agreement on the need to reassess all site conditions, from soil to pavement, before starting projects with extended planning phases, acknowledgment of design-phase gaps, and concurrence with findings related to procurement and construction challenges. Additionally, the respondent noted that the final recommendations highlight significant gaps in WSSC Water's planning, design, construction, and outreach practices throughout the project lifecycle. Feedback further indicated that the audit's findings raise concerns about both past and current WSSC Water policies and practices. There were comment noted that the report does not include full cost accounting or designate departments to implement the recommendations. Consistent with the audit's scope, WSP focused on construction-phase costs and process-improvement opportunities and is working with WSSC Water's leadership to update the status of each improvement initiative.

In this summary, WSP is providing responses to the four questions received with one of the comments during the comment period and within the scope of the independent audit. Questions were reworded, where necessary, for clarity or privacy.

1. Why was the former WSSC Water Director of Engineering not interviewed?

**Response:** Interviews were conducted exclusively with current employees of WSSC Water, consulting firms, and the contractor. This approach was based on practical considerations, including accessibility, availability, privacy obligations, and the need to minimize potential bias. Where interview participation of former employees was not feasible during the audit timeline, WSP relied on official records and cross-verification with other stakeholders to avoid gaps. This is consistent with our published methodology for audits of projects.

2. Why were drivers who traverse Bond Mill Road not interviewed including: USPS, Federal Express, UPS, and school bus drivers.

**Response:** As part of this audit, members of the public were invited to provide feedback through interviews with the project team or by completing a comment form. The responses received adequately reflected public perspectives relevant to the audit. While broad engagement is important, it is not practical to involve every individual or organization that traveled on Bond Mill Road, nor would such an approach meaningfully contribute to developing actionable recommendations for future capital projects. Our approach ensured balanced, verifiable information that supported the audit's findings.

3. Why were the principal of Bond Mill Elementary School or the crossing guard not interviewed who could report on daily impact of the project?

**Response:** As part of this audit, members of the public were invited to provide feedback through interviews with the project team or by completing a comment form. The comment form was distributed to Bond Mill Elementary School, resulting in several responses that reflected the community's experience with the project, which adequately reflected input from the school community. Conducting individual interviews with specific staff (e.g., the principal or crossing guard) could have provided additional detail, but we consider the collected information via Form has provided sufficient information to meet the audit's objectives, hence additional interviews were not necessary.

4. The question was never answered or pressed by WSP as to why the WSSC Water allowed the contractor to abandon the project and the reasons why. (also the site was never cleared of equipment and had to ask WSSC Water to ask the contractor to clear abandoned equipment as late as last year.) The report articulated that the contractor had to abandon the Bond Mill Road project for a "higher" priority but did not say what that higher priority was.

**Response:** The audit report appendix – A.3 Interview with WSSC Water Project Team documented the interview minutes. The interview minutes included the discussion between WSP and WSSC Water related to the Contractor's temporary demobilization and communication to the community. WSP found no formal, documented determination of the "higher priority" in the records reviewed, or a written approval from WSSC Water authorizing temporary demobilization and documented this accordingly. The audit appropriately concentrated on contract-administration sufficiency and process improvements. They did not probe further the adequacy of decisions made for the individual projects.

Additional communication regarding the audit findings has been requested, and WSP will coordinate with WSSC Water to address these inquiries. Some additional comments, fell outside the scope of this independent audit, therefore WSP did not provide responses to those comments.

WSP acknowledges and values the feedback received and appreciates the opportunity to clarify the audit's scope and methodology. The primary purpose of this review was to provide objective, evidence-based insights into project processes and performance, with the goal of supporting improved implementation of future capital projects at WSSC Water.